

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (withdrawn) A composite, reinforced, collapsed bulk bin assembly capable of being erected to a deployed, articulated configuration, said bulk bin assembly comprising:

a bulk bin body, having at least one bottom panel, and a plurality of side walls, operably configured to be disposed substantially perpendicular to the at least one bottom panel, when the bulk bin body is in a deployed configuration,

the bulk bin body being positioned in a collapsed configuration, wherein some of the side walls are disposed in juxtaposed, overlying, parallel orientation relative to remaining ones of the side walls; and

at least one substantially stretchable reinforcing sleeve, disposed about the plurality of side walls, wherein the reinforcing sleeve is snugly attached about the bulk bin body, when the bulk bin body is in its collapsed configuration, and further wherein when the bulk bin body is in its collapsed configuration, the reinforcing sleeve is stretched, relative to an at-rest, unstressed state of the reinforcing sleeve.

2. (withdrawn) The composite, reinforced collapsed bulk bin assembly according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcing sleeve is stretched, when the composite, reinforced collapsible bulk bin is in its erected configuration, an amount of one to two percent, inclusive, of its at-rest, unstressed circumference.

3. (withdrawn) The composite, reinforced collapsed bulk bin assembly according to claim 1, wherein the bulk bin body is fabricated from at least one of paper, paperboard, corrugated paperboard.

4. (withdrawn) The composite, reinforced collapsed bulk bin assembly according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcing sleeve is fabricated from a substantially stretchable material comprised of at least one of polyethylene, polypropylene.

5. (withdrawn) The composite, reinforced collapsed bulk bin assembly according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcing sleeve is monolithically formed as a single extruded member, cut off from a continuous tubular extrusion of reinforcing sleeve material.

6. (withdrawn) The composite, reinforced collapsed bulk bin assembly according to claim 1, wherein the reinforcing sleeve is provided with two seams extending in a direction substantially parallel to a vertically extending direction along the side walls of the bulk bin body.

7. (withdrawn) The composite, reinforced collapsed bulk bin assembly according to claim 1, wherein the bulk bin body, when in its deployed, fully articulated configuration, has a polygonal cross-section.

8. (currently amended) A method for making a composite, reinforced collapsed bulk bin assembly, capable of being erected to a deployed, articulated configuration, comprising the steps of:

providing at least one blank, operably configured to form, upon ~~articulation~~
manipulation and adhesion along a manufacturer's joint thereof, a collapsed bulk bin body;

manipulating ~~articulating~~ and adhering the at least one blank, along the manufacturer's joint to provide a bulk bin body, with at least one bottom panel and a plurality of side walls, operably configured to be disposed substantially perpendicular to the at least one bottom panel, when the bulk bin body is in a deployed configuration;[[,]]

positioning the bulk bin body in a collapsed configuration, wherein some of the side walls are disposed in juxtaposed, overlying, parallel orientation relative to remaining ones of the side walls;[[,]]

providing at least one substantially stretchable reinforcing sleeve, the at least one reinforcing sleeve being formed with a tubular portion, having a longitudinal axis and a circumference which, when the tubular portion is flattened and in an unstressed state, is less than

an external circumference of the bulk bin body, when the bulk bin body is in a flat, collapsed configuration; and

placing the at least one reinforcing sleeve, snugly about the plurality of side walls, of the bulk bin body, when the bulk bin body is in its collapsed configuration, so that when the at least one reinforcing sleeve is in position about the plurality of side walls of the bulk bin body, the reinforcing sleeve is slightly stretched, relative to an at-rest, unstressed state of the reinforcing sleeve.

9. (original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the step of placing the reinforcing sleeve onto the collapsed bulk bin body, further comprises the step of placing the reinforcing sleeve into a stretched configuration, in the amount of one to two percent, inclusive, of its at-rest, unstressed circumference, when the reinforcing sleeve is in place on the erected bulk bin body.

10. (currently amended) The method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of fabricating the bulk bin body from at least one of paper, paperboard, and corrugated paperboard.

11. (currently amended) The method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of fabricating the reinforcing sleeve from a substantially stretchable material comprising at least one of polyethylene, and polypropylene.

12. (original) The method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of monolithically forming the reinforcing sleeve as a single extruded member, cut off from a continuous tubular extrusion of reinforcing sleeve material.

13. (original) The method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of forming the reinforcing sleeve with two seams extending in a direction substantially parallel to a vertically extending direction along the side walls of the bulk bin body.

14. (original) The method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of providing the bulk bin body, when in its deployed configuration, with a polygonal cross-section.

15. (currently amended) The method according to claim 8, wherein the step of placing the at least one reinforcing sleeve onto the bulk bin body comprises the steps of:

bowing the collapsed bulk bin body, so that a chord distance between opposing edges of the bowed, collapsed bulk bin body is substantially less than a corresponding distance between opposed edges of the collapsed bulk bin body, when in an at-rest, unstressed configuration;

sliding the at least one reinforcing sleeve onto the bowed, collapsed bulk bin body; and

releasing the bowed, collapsed bulk bin body, to permit it to reconfigure toward its at-rest, unstressed configuration.

16. (currently amended) The method according to claim 8, wherein the step of placing the at least one reinforcing sleeve onto the bulk bin body comprises the steps of:

applying a force to the reinforcing sleeve to stretch the reinforcing sleeve in a direction transverse to the longitudinal axis;

sliding the stretched reinforcing sleeve over the plurality of side walls of the collapsed bulk bin body; and

removing the stretching force from the reinforcing sleeve.

17. (new) The method according to claim 8, wherein the step of providing at least one substantially stretchable reinforcing sleeve further comprises providing at least one substantially stretchable reinforcing sleeve, wherein the at least one reinforcing sleeve being formed with a seamless, tubular portion.

18. (new) The method according to claim 8, wherein the step of providing at least one substantially stretchable reinforcing sleeve further comprises:

providing at least one substantially stretchable reinforcing sleeve, the at least one reinforcing sleeve being formed with a tubular portion , a sealed top end, and an open bottom end; and

placing the at least one reinforcing sleeve, snugly about the plurality of side walls of the bulk bin body by placing the bulk bin body within the open end of the reinforcing sleeve such that the sealed end of the reinforcing sleeve covers an open top end of the bulk bin body to reduce moisture intrusion into the bulk bin body prior to loading the bulk bin body, the sealed end of the reinforcing sleeve is configured to be unsealed to allow for loading of the bulk bin body.

19. (new) The method according to claim 8, wherein the bulk bin body has a height defined by the plurality of side walls when the bulk bin body is in the deployed configuration, and wherein the step of providing at least one substantially stretchable reinforcing sleeve further comprises providing at least one substantially stretchable reinforcing sleeve, wherein the at least one reinforcing sleeve being formed with a tubular portion, the tubular portion having a height substantially equal to the height of the bulk bin body.

20. (new) The method according to claim 8, wherein the bulk bin body has a height defined by the plurality of side walls when the bulk bin body is in the deployed configuration, and wherein the step of providing at least one substantially stretchable reinforcing sleeve further comprises providing at least one substantially stretchable reinforcing sleeve, wherein the at least one reinforcing sleeve being formed with a tubular portion, the tubular portion having a height approximately equal to one-quarter of the height of the bulk bin body.